



Fact Sheet

SS/HS Is Changing Lives

This project helps kids with major issues—mental health issues, issues around violence, issues around substance abuse—and when you can turn around one kid, then you can turn around another and another. Those are the things that really make a difference. (Grant evaluator, Omaha SS/HS initiative, Omaha, NE)

My child likes to talk and share more with other children; he has more desire to go to school and likes it more than before. He seems to have more energy and self-esteem and is studying better. (Mother, Salinas SS/HS initiative, Salinas, CA)

I know that this is a safe school and nothing bad has happened here. My mom trusts the people. I am happy to be here and I like it. (10-year-old student, Weslaco SS/HS initiative, Weslaco, TX)

***I**t is not enough to prepare our children for the world; we must also prepare the world for our children.—Luis J. Rodriguez*

The tenet at the heart of this quote is one of the fundamental goals of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Initiative. While each SS/HS community has unique challenges to overcome on its road to success, improving the lives of children and families by reducing risk factors, including violence and substance abuse, and increasing resiliency by providing mental health services, educational reform, and safe school policies remain the benchmarks against which achievement is measured.

The Flandreau Indian School, an SS/HS grant site in South Dakota, is documenting decreases in substance use, violence, and gang activity as well as increases in academic achievement, social skills, and student retention. Similarly, in Florida, the Lee County SS/HS initiative is reporting a 5 percent increase in academic achievement among all students in the district.

The faces of SS/HS are many, but the vision is one—safe schools, healthy students.

Faces of SS/HS: Flandreau, SD

As one of the oldest cities in South Dakota, Flandreau bills itself as “a small town with a vision for the future.” This tribal community, 40 minutes north of Sioux Falls, is home to more than 2,300 residents, including the students and staff of the Flandreau Indian School. Founded in 1871, the Flandreau Indian School is a boarding school funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The students represent 60 tribes from more than 30 States, and 99 percent of them come to the school from the poverty and limited opportunity of life on a reservation. Since its inception in 2001, the grant has successfully implemented safe schools policies and comprehensive educational reform as well as fostered a positive academic environment for more than 400 students. The school’s Transition Dorm (T-Dorm), created through the SS/HS Initiative, is a multifaceted residential program that includes group and individual counseling, wellness, and aftercare services to assist students who are involved in negative behaviors, which would otherwise lead to suspension or expulsion. To date, the Flandreau Indian School’s T-Dorm program has helped to retain more than 160 students.